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## THE FUTURE.

As much as the recent publications concerning Lanier have contributed to increase interest, knowledge, and appreciation in the study of his work, many interesting and useful things yet remain to be done.

A real comparison of Lanier, for example, with those American poets he has been so often said to excel, would yield sound and significant results. His celestial "harp that sounds when an all-love sings" is not unlike Longfellow's Æolian lyre rising "from earth unto the fixed stars." Both Longfellow and Bryant belong, along with Lanier, to the multitude of poets who have likened their ladies' eyes to "springs." While the sun appeared to Lanier to "await at the ponderous gate of the West," Bryant perceived how he "hides his light at the doors of the West." Whittier, as well as Lanier, spoke of life as a palimpsest writing. Lanier pictured the tides flooding "the uttermost creeks and the low lying lanes." Lowell saw them "flooding back with a ripply cheer into every bare inlet and creek and bay." Lanier has been compared frequently with Poe and sometimes with Whitman. It would be well to compare him also with Timrod and Hayne.

Whoever makes out, as Dr. Holmes did for Emerson, a list of Lanier's reading, and traces the literary influences upon his work, will do a good service. When Lanier writes how "lips draw back with recent pressure pale, to round and redden for another kiss," one must remember how Shakspere pictured the lips of *Venus and Adonis* "making them red and pale with fresh variety." Before Lanier wrote "Thus clamored his mind to his mind," Keats had written "But to her heart her heart was voluble." Shelley called the stars a cloud of bees before Lanier imaged the sun as a "star-fed Bee." Prosper Mérimée wrote his *acquerie* before Lanier projected his. The "course of things" appeared "shaped like an ox" as long before Lanier's *Clover* as Goethe's *Werther*, as Norse mythology, and as the *Book of Numbers*. Lenau's "Sedge Songs" are not the only interesting parallel in German literature to some of Lanier's ideas and expressions. Others are to be found in Grillparzer, Schlegel, Fichte, Schiller, and, even, Walther von der

Vogelweide. Had not Lanier acknowledged his debt to Omar Khayyam, *The Stirrip Cup* might do it for him. Chaucer, Spenser, Crashaw, Donne, Lovelace, Marlowe, Milton, Pope, Rossetti, George Eliot, and Matthew Arnold, all expressed thoughts which apparently influenced Lanier.

Such, and many other, detailed studies of Lanier are yet to be made. The time is also growing ripe for some large constructive study which shall preserve, group, and employ the numerous and valuable details already accumulated.

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## THE DIMENSIONS OF MALEBOLGE.

MR. PAGET TOYNBEE, in his valuable *Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante* recently issued,<sup>1</sup> gives the following measurements of the divisions of the eighth circle:—breadth of each Bolgia, one-half mile; circumference of Bolgia 10 eleven miles, of Bolgia 9 twenty-two miles, of Bolgia 8 thirty-three miles, of Bolgia 7 forty-four, of Bolgia 6 fifty-five, of Bolgia 5 sixty-six, of Bolgia 4 seventy-seven, of Bolgia 3 eighty-eight, of Bolgia 2 ninety-nine, of Bolgia 1 one hundred and ten; the diameter of Malebolge at its upper rim thirty-five miles. These dimensions Mr. Toynbee has apparently derived from Vernon's computations,<sup>2</sup> who deduces them from the brief statements given by Dante, *Inf.* xxix, 9, and xxx, 86-87. In the first Vergil states that Bolgia 9 is twenty-two miles in circumference.<sup>3</sup> In the second Maestro Adamo affirms that Bolgia 10 is eleven miles in circumference, and has a breadth of half a mile.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that these measurements hold good for all the remaining Bolge, the dimensions given by Vernon and Toynbee may be readily deduced.

But the problem is far from being so simple as it seems at first. A brief mathematical computation suffices to show the incompatibility of the two assumptions. For, if we have two

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Readings on the Inferno*, Vol. i, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

<sup>3</sup> "miglia ventiduo la valle volge."

<sup>4</sup> "Con tutto ch'ella volge undici miglia,  
E men d'un mezzo di traverso non ci ha."

concentric circles whose difference in circumference is eleven miles, the difference in length of their respective radii must be, not .5, but 1.75+ miles; and this difference would be increased by the slope of the whole circle toward the centre. Or conversely, two circles whose radii differ in length by .5 miles will show a difference in circumference of only 3.149 miles, instead of eleven. The only escape from this dilemma, retaining Vernon's theory, is to assume that the *argini* separating the Bolge have the remarkable breadth of  $(1.75-.50=) 1.25$  miles, and are consequently much wider than the Bolge themselves.

An examination of the passages in which Dante speaks of the transition from one Bolgia to another shows that this assumption is not susceptible of exact proof. Of these the most important is the description in Canto xxiii, describing his and Vergil's escape from the Malebranche of Bolgia 5. The two poets, after beholding from the inner bank of Bolgia 5 the quarrel of the demons, turn away, but are soon pursued. Vergil then (*di subito*) seizes Dante, and, apparently from the spot where they were standing, descends hastily the steep bank of the sixth Bolgia.<sup>6</sup> This would seem to imply that the summit of the Argine dividing Bolge 5 and 6 consisted of a narrow ridge; and the steepness of the sides shows that it could not be much wider at the bottom. I obtain a similar inference from the description in the following canto<sup>7</sup> of the passage from Bolgia 6 to 7. Here, after the laborious climb to the top of the Argine, Dante sits down to rest and is reproved by Vergil. Then, immediately on rising,—“su per lo scoglio prendemmo la via.” For passages of like import compare xviii, 100-102; xix, 7-9, 128-133; xxvi, 13-18; xxvii, 133-35; xxix, 37-39, 52-53. From all these indications I infer, although Dante nowhere gives an exact description, that the “argini” are merely narrow dikes of rock, with almost perpendicular sides, which intersect but do not interrupt the “scogli” or bridges.<sup>8</sup> If this inference hold good, then the assumption that each Bolgia at

the bottom has a breadth of half a mile must be given up.

Scartazzini<sup>9</sup> assumes from Maestro Adamo's words<sup>10</sup> that the circumference of the Bolge increases in an arithmetical progression;—so Bolgia 10, eleven miles in circumference, Bolgia 9, twenty-two, Bolgia 8, forty-four, etc. This would give to Malebolge a total circumference of 5632 miles, with a radius of 854.4, and a diameter of 1708.8 miles. These startling figures are seen at once to be erroneous when we recall that the time consumed in crossing it is only six to nine hours.<sup>11</sup> Vernon's assumption, on the contrary, is entirely harmonious with the length of the journey, but, as I have pointed out, is not consistent with itself.

The purpose of this article is merely to call the attention of Dante scholars to a somewhat obscure point in the architecture of the *Inferno*, and to the danger of hasty deduction. Can we assume from the dimensions of Bolge 9 and 10 given in xxix, 8-9, and xxx, 86-87, any definite ratio in regard to the measurements of the other Bolge? It seems a somewhat bold assumption, incapable of direct proof; although, as we have seen, Vernon's deduction of a total diameter of 110 miles is perfectly consistent with the time-references. At any rate, the inference that each Bolgia has a breadth of half a mile must be given up. On the other hand, it is possible to deduce certain consistent and definite dimensions for Bolge 9 and 10 and Circle 9 from the statements given. Thus, as Bolgia 9 has a circumference of 22, and Bolgia 10 of 11 miles, the width of Bolgia 9 must be 1.75 miles. Bolgia 10, it is expressly stated, has a width of .5 miles; its total radius, for a circumference of 11, must be 1.75 miles. Then the “pozzo” (=Circle 9 of the *Inferno*) must have a radius of  $(1.75-.50=) 1.25$  miles, and a diameter of 2.5 miles. From these figures we obtain for the circumference of the “cerchio minore, il punto dell'universo,” 7.85 miles.

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#### AN ESTIMATE OF BÉRANGER BY GOETHE.

##### I.

GOETHE'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH BÉRANGER. GOETHE, who had always manifested an intense interest in what was going on in France,

<sup>9</sup> *Div. Com.*, ed. min., p. 246.

<sup>10</sup> xxx, 86-87.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Moore, *Time-References in the Div. Com.*

<sup>5</sup> xxiii, 34-36.

<sup>6</sup> E giù dal colle della ripa dura  
Supin si diede alla pendente roccia  
Che l'un dei lati all'altra bolgia tura, 43-45.

<sup>7</sup> xxiv, 22-42, 61-63.

<sup>8</sup> Note especially the wording in xviii, 100-102:  
Già eravam dove lo stretto calle  
Con l'argine secondo s'incrociava  
E fa di quello ad un altr' arco spalle.